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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/757,829

01/14/2004

Seigo Shiraishi

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5512

7590

10/18/2006

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, TAI V

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3729

DATE MAILED: 10/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/757,829

Applicant(s)

SHIRAISHI ET AL.

Examiner

Tai Van Nguyen

Art Unit

3729

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 August 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 13-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13 and 17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 18 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 10/434,516.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/14/04, 3/22/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. The applicants' amendment filed on 8/29/2006 has been fully considered and made of record.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. In claim 18, the phrase "after solidification ... the second layer" (line 2-3) is new matter. The specification, as originally Filed, does not provide support for the fluid filling material after solidification is "greater than" the volume of the voids of the porous member to form the second layer.

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3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 18, it is unclear from the disclosure what is meant by "after solidification ... the second layer" (lines 2-3).

Note: No art rejections have been applied to claim 18 since there is great deal of confusion and uncertainty as to the proper interpretation of the limitations of the claims. Therefore, it would not be proper to reject the claim on the basis of prior art. See MPEP 2173.06.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 13 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tone et al (US 4,523,122).

As applied to claim 13, Tone et al disclose a method for manufacturing an acoustic matching member, the acoustic matching member comprising at least two layers including a first layer and a second layer that have different acoustic impedance

values from each other, the first layer being made of a composite material of a porous member and a filling material supported by void portions of the porous member, the second layer being made of the filling material and the first layer and the second layer being present in this stated order, the method comprising the steps of: (a) filling voids of a porous member (16, Fig. 4) so as not to leave air bubbles (column 10, lines 10-14) with a fluid filling material whose volume after solidification is not less than a volume of the voids of the porous member; and (b) solidifying the fluid filling material inside of the voids and the surplus fluid filling material at the same time (column 9, lines 10-24).

As applied to claim 17, Tone et al. wherein the filling material comprises epoxy resin (column 6, lines 49-53).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed 8/29/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicants contend that Tone et al. does not teach the limitations of to "produce an acoustic matching member that includes a porous first layer whose voids

are filled with a filling material and a second layer made of the same material as the filling material in the first layer”

Furthermore, the applicants contend that Tone et al do not teach or provides “one layer made of the same material that is the filling material inside voids of a porous member of another layer”.

The examiner traverses for at least the following reasons:

With respect to the process steps being drawn to “an acoustic matching member”, these limitations recited in the preamble of the claims as intended use limitations and have not been given patentable weight since the body of the claims do not depend upon the preamble for completeness and the process steps are able to stand alone. In re Hirao, 535 F.2d 67 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976).

In regards the merits of Tone; layer 16 is read as the claimed “porous member” as the pores or openings of this porous member are filled with a filling fluid, e. g. resin (col. 5, lines 14+). The filling fluid, e. g. in the voids, and surplus filling fluid, e. g. resin surrounding the voids, (see Fig. 4) is solidified at the same time to the extent that the final product (shown in Fig. 9) is hardened, after curing, to normal atmospheric conditions or to normal operating conditions.

Therefore, Tone fully satisfies the limitations of claim 13.

Conclusion

8. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tai Van Nguyen whose telephone number is 571-272-4567. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30 A.M - 4:30 P.M).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Vo can be reached on 571-272-4690. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

TN.
September 29, 2006



A. DEXTER TUGBANG
PRIMARY EXAMINER